

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
SAINT LOUIS

660 SOUTH KINGSHIGHWAY BLVD.  
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

April 22, 1961

Mr. Robert P. Clark  
Office of the Curator  
44 Holyoke House  
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Clark:

Your question as to the impartiality of the Committee on Consultants, has, I think, been answered in the report itself, in which the Committee stated that it was advisable to have informed people if the advice offered were to be good. If in order to secure impartial advice, the advisors must be ignorant, then something is wrong. Moreover, this Committee was an advisory committee; it did not serve in an executive capacity. The Senate received advice not only from the Committee but from many other sources.

The Committee received excellent cooperation from the NIH, but the total number of witnesses heard was large. The charge to the Committee referred specifically to the NIH itself; how could the Committee operate if it heard no witnesses from the NIH? I can only say that the members of the Committee believed themselves to be sufficiently objective to hear testimony without being unduly influenced by it.

My own judgment as to the reason for the generous support of Congress for medical research is that Congress has felt the expressed desire of the public programs leading to better health. Moreover, Congress has understood, I believe, that money for health research is an investment which pays dividends. As one example, the increased life expectancy which we now enjoy is a result of past research. It is largely caused by decreased infant and juvenile

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mortality. The man-power which was required to expand our economy and to fight two wars has been directly forthcoming from health research.

Finally, to comment on my good friend John Russell's statements, I frankly think he is all wrong. Medical educators are no more concerned with politics as such than they have always been concerned with possible donors or philanthropists. I do not believe investigators are under any pressure to apply for grants, but rather that they now have an opportunity to state their case to an intelligent and informed audience. Moreover, I believe the saturation point for support of research is far from having been reached. What many people do not realize is that the apparatus<sup>2</sup> and facilities necessary for current research problems is vastly more expensive than that needed a generation ago. I am sure that a person familiar with Newton's experiments and their costs would feel that modern equipment in a physics laboratory was extraordinarily expensive. This is what has happened in medical research. Funds are needed to equip laboratories and investigators with complicated and expensive instruments, and for the personnel to maintain and operate them. I do not believe this represents an opening of the "flood-gates", and I do not agree that this is more than investigators need. Finally, I believe the Committee made an excellent case for the productivity of the funds requested, which, when compared with those necessary for, say, missile research, are still but minuscule.

Sincerely yours,

Edward W. Dempsey,  
Dean

ewd:]

cc: Mr. Boisfeuillet Jones